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ABSTRACT

This report details the results of the 2001 Yearly Evaluation of Services by Students Survey (YESS) from Howard Community College (HCC) (Maryland). The survey is given to randomly chosen class sections each spring. The number of students chosen to participate in the 2001 survey was 1,994, and the response rate was 38% (766 students). Ratings on the survey are given on a five-point scale, with 5 being "very satisfied" and 1 being "very dissatisfied." The survey gathered student characteristics according to the following categories: (1) female (55%); (2) 19 and younger (33%); (3) 20-25 years old (39%); (4) White (64%); (5) African American/Black (14%); (6) full-time student (49%); (7) income under $30,000 (24%); (8) income over $100,000 (24%); (9) employed full time (40%); and (10) employed part time (39%). Other findings included: (1) three services--cafeteria, financial aid (amount of aid), and parking--rated below 3.5; (2) the highest-rated services were admissions (4.1), telephone registration (4.0), and publications (4.0); (3) of the 52 items on the survey, part-time students rated 37 higher than full-timers; (4) students rated excellence in education and campus safety as the most important aspects of a college, with more than 70% reporting satisfaction on these items; and (5) 80% of students were satisfied with the quality of instruction at HCC. The article includes 19 tables, graphs, and charts. (NB)

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HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
You Can Get There From Here.

ANNUAL SURVEY OF
STUDENT SATISFACTION

Research Report Number 109 June 2001

Report on the 2001 YESS SURVEY

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HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
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ANNUAL SURVEY OF STUDENT SATISFACTION

Report on the 2001 YESS SURVEY

Research Report Number 109 June 2001

The Yearly Evaluation of Services by Students (YESS) Survey, first administered in 1991, has since been the instrument used for gathering information on student satisfaction at Howard Community College (HCC). The survey gives students the opportunity to express their levels of satisfaction with college services and other aspects of the campus environment and college life. HCC values this annual measure of student satisfaction and uses it as a key feedback mechanism for monitoring the quality of service it provides to students.

Each spring, class sections are randomly chosen to participate in the survey. The cooperation of faculty teaching those class sections is solicited and the survey is administered in class or returned at a later class session. In the spring of 2001, 90 class sections were selected, and instructors in 79 returned completed surveys, for a section response rate of 88%. The number of students chosen to participate in the survey was 1,994, and 766 responded, for a student response rate of 38%. Since many students were in more than one chosen class section and were instructed to fill out only one survey, the true student response rate was undoubtedly higher. The 766 YESS respondents represented 15% of the 5,269 students enrolled at HCC in the spring of 2001. The respondent sample is large enough so that results of the survey can be generalized to the student body for spring 2001 with a 95% confidence level and within a 3% margin of error.

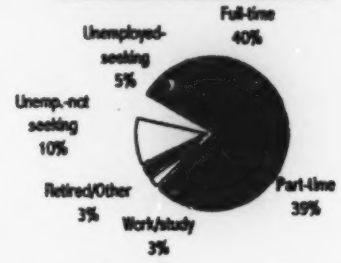
Student Characteristics	*YESS 2001* (766)	*All Spring Students* (5269)
Female	55%	57%
19 & younger	33%	27%
20 – 25 years old	39%	29%
White	64%	61%
African American/Black	14%	17%
Full-time student	49%	29%
Income under $30,000	24%	NA
Income over $100,000	24%	NA
Employed full time	40%	NA
Employed part time	39%	NA

Who were the Respondents?

The respondents to this year's YESS Survey were similar to all students enrolled in the spring semester. There were, however, higher proportions of young and full-time students among the respondents than among all students.

The annual YESS Survey is the only mechanism at HCC for collecting data on students' income and employment status. While the proportion in the highest income group is the same as last year, that of the lowest group actually declined (from 31%). Fully 40% of the students who responded to the survey are working full time – a surprisingly high figure given the over-representation of full-time students. An almost equal proportion (39%) was working part-time while attending HCC.

Employment Status of YESS Survey Respondents



Just over half of the respondents (52%) had been at HCC for three or more semesters at the time of the survey, and almost half were full-time students. Most (61%) took classes during the day, and just over half (52%) reported GPAs of 3.0 or higher.

Primary reasons for choosing HCC:	
Proximity to home	37%
Affordability	21%
Quality of Education	10%
Ease of transferring	10%

Primary goals in attending HCC:	
Transfer to a four-year school	54%
Obtain an AA degree	29%

On the survey, students were asked about access to a computer, E-mail, and the Internet. As was true last year, less than one percent said they did not have access to a computer.

Best regular access to a computer	
Home	76%
At HCC	13%
Work	10%
Elsewhere	1%
Have E-mail access	*96%*
Have Internet access	*97%*

The proportions of students having E-mail and Internet connections went up from last year. Now, 96% have E-mail and 97% have an Internet connection - both were 92% last year.

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How did students rate college services?

On the YESS Survey, ratings on college services are given on a five-point scale ranging from "Very satisfied" (5) to "Very dissatisfied" (1). (There is also an "Unaware of" option that has not been used in calculating the means of percentages satisfied.) The table that follows shows the highest rated college services, all with ratings of 3.70 or over. (See full table set for all service ratings at: www.howardcc.edu/hcc/plan&eval/yess2001tab.pdf) The percent satisfied shown on the table indicates those respondents who gave ratings of four or five. (That does not mean the remaining students are dissatisfied, since the "neutral" or "3" rating often accounts for a substantial percentage of respondents.)

HIGHEST RATED SERVICES		
☆☆☆☆ Services (3.72 Overall)	Mean	% Satisfied
Admissions services	4.10	85%
Telephone registration	4.01	78%
HCC publications	4.00	78%
Library	3.99	76%
Bookstore	3.91	75%
Registration: in-person	3.85	70%
HCC Web site	3.84	69%
Test Center	3.83	66%
Learning Assistance Center	3.77	60%
Welcome Center	3.76	61%
Orientation for new students	3.70	55%

The highest rated services on the 2001 YESS Survey are strikingly similar to those on the 2000 survey. The highest ten, in fact, are the same, with some slight changes in position. *Admissions services*, maintained the same high rating (4.10) as last year, and that area was again the top-rated service. *Telephone registration, HCC Publications*, and *the Library* had ratings at or near 4.00 and had more than three-quarters of respondents satisfied. New to the "highest rated" group this year is *Orientation for new students*. For the whole services section of the survey, the overall rating was 3.72.

AT HCC it has been the custom that units rated below 3.50 will examine their business practices to identify possible areas for improvement. On this year's survey, there were three services that were rated below 3.50: *Cafeteria (3.44), Financial Aid: amount of aid (3.40)*, and *Parking (2.83)*.

Another important consideration is the proportion of students who are unaware of a service. For the purpose of calculating means this rating is not used, but it may be instructive to know in which areas students' consciousness may be raised. Services with more than a quarter of respondents saying they were "unaware of" that service were: *Financial Aid: amount of aid received, Orientation for new students, Learning Assistance Center, Financial Aid: helpfulness of counselors*, and *Career and job placement counseling*.

The highest levels of awareness, each with 5% or fewer of students saying they were "unaware of" that service were: *Cashier's Office, Publications, Parking, Admissions*, and *the Bookstore*.

What were the ratings on instructional topics?

On the YESS Survey, there are 12 items that deal with instructional topics. As was the case in 2000, all 12 were rated above 3.50, as shown in the following table. As has been true in the past, *Class Size* is the item with which students exhibit the highest level of satisfaction. *Quality of instruction overall, Attitude of faculty towards students*, and *Quality of computer services* were also rated above 4.00.

STUDENTS' RATINGS ON INSTRUCTIONAL TOPICS		
Survey Items (3.83 Overall)	Mean	% Satisfied
Class size	4.14	84%
Quality of instruction overall	4.04	80%
Attitude of faculty toward students	4.03	78%
Quality of computer services	4.02	79%
Availability/help of faculty	3.99	77%
Quality of instruction in major	3.97	74%
Quality of labs	3.94	75%
Access to up-to-date technology	3.92	74%
Diversity in curriculum	3.90	72%
Academic advice/assistance	3.77	66%
Academic support: counseling	3.71	60%
Availability of courses: time/place	3.63	64%

Nine of the 12 instructional topics had ratings at or over 3.90, and the overall rating on this section was 3.93. The only item with greater than 10% dissatisfaction was *Availability of courses at a convenient time/place* at 13%. No other item in this section had a dissatisfaction level over 7%.

How were the campus environment and activities for students rated?

For the first time on the YESS Survey, students were asked to rate the *importance* of the 11 items in this section as well as their *satisfaction* with those items. Their importance and satisfaction ratings (both on five-point, high-to-low scales) are shown in the table below with the percent satisfied. Only three of the 11 items garnered importance ratings over 3.50, and for nine of the 11, the satisfaction ratings were higher than importance ratings.

RATINGS ON CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT / STUDENT ACTIVITIES			
Survey Items (3.40 Overall)	Mean Rating		Percent Satisfied
	Importance	Satisfaction	
Condition of bldgs/grounds	4.00	3.73	60%
Attitude of HCC employees	3.84	3.72	58%
Overall climate of diversity	3.61	3.66	55%
Cultural arts activities	3.23	3.43	44%
Physical Education facility	3.17	3.32	39%
College social life	3.08	3.20	38%
Sports/athletic programs	3.08	3.16	30%
Block time	3.06	3.30	38%
Student newspaper	2.98	3.18	32%
Student clubs	2.97	3.15	31%
Student Gov't Association	2.92	3.17	31%

Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction levels may be better quality indicators than the importance rating for these items. Eight items in this section of the survey had dissatisfaction levels higher than 10%. They were: *Cultural arts activities (12%), Block Time (13%), Physical Education facility (14%), SGA (15%), Newspaper (16%), Sports (17%), Clubs (17%)*, and *Social life (19%)*.

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What were student views on other topics?

On the section of the survey called, "About You and Your Views" students also rated both their satisfaction and the importance of ten items. These ratings and satisfaction levels are shown in the table below. For all items, importance was rated higher than satisfaction, and the satisfaction ratings for all but one item were above 3.50. Only two items had dissatisfaction levels over 10%. The two items were: *Your Reading/English placement test scores accurately reflect your skill level* and *Your Math placement test scores accurately reflect your skill level.*

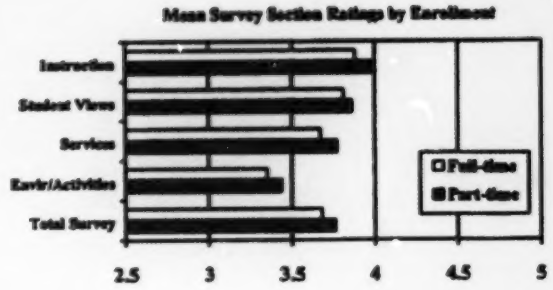
STUDENT VIEWS			
Survey Items (3.83 Overall)	*Mean Rating*		
	Importance	*Satisfaction*	*Percent Satisfied*
Receiving an excellent education	4.47	3.92	71%
You feel safe on campus	4.42	4.10	76%
HCC is helping you meet goals	4.38	3.96	71%
HCC has met your expectations	4.32	3.95	72%
You feel welcome on campus	4.24	4.01	72%
HCC is preparing you for a career	4.19	3.72	60%
HCC is preparing you for transfer	4.13	3.80	64%
Problem-solving skills have improved	4.06	3.70	58%
Reading/English test scores reflect level	3.98	3.62	57%
Math test scores reflect your level	3.88	3.39	48%

With the exception of the items on the placement test scores, ratings on the items in this section of the survey were good, indicating that students feel welcome and safe at HCC. They also feel they are getting an excellent education and are being helped to meet their goals.

Were there differences in ratings between part-time and full-time students?

As has been seen in past years, there was a tendency for part-time students to be somewhat more positive in their ratings than full-time students. Of the 52 items on the survey, part-time students rated 37 higher than full-timers, and part-time students gave 12 items ratings of 4.00 or higher compared to the 7 items that got ratings that high from full-time students. The lowest rating on the entire survey was the 2.52 given to *Parking* by full-time students. Across all sections of the survey there were 14 areas in which there were significant differences in ratings between full- and part-time students. The highest and lowest rated areas by each group are shown below.

Highest Rated Survey Items	
Full-time Students	*Part-time Students*
You feel safe on campus	Admissions services
Class size	Class size
Library	Attitude of faculty
Lowest Rated Survey Items	
Full-time Students	*Part-time Students*
SGA	Student newspaper
Sports/athletic programs	Student clubs
Parking	Parking

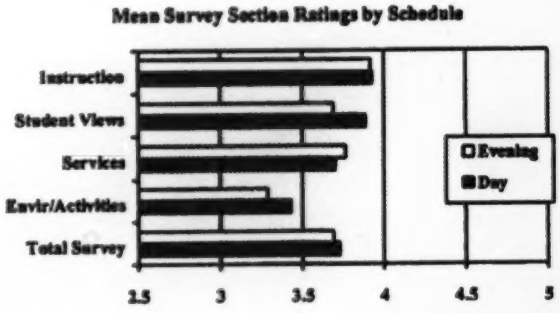


When overall ratings between part- and full-time students are compared for each major section of the survey, it is seen that part-time students were more positive in their ratings than full-timers on every section of the survey.

What were the differences in ratings between day and evening students?

There was not a great deal of difference in the overall mean ratings between day and evening students. Of the 52 items on the survey, day students rated 33 higher than did evening students, but most differences were slight. Across all sections of the survey, there were 12 areas of significant difference between day and evening students. Even though the day/evening differences were not that great overall, attention should be paid to the lowest rated items. This is especially true of items for which both day and evening students gave ratings under 3.50.

Highest Rated Survey Items	
Day Students	*Evening Students*
You feel safe on campus	Admissions services
Class size	Class size
You feel welcome	Attitude of faculty
Lowest Rated Survey Items	
Day Students	*Evening Students*
Student clubs	Sports/athletics
Sports/athletic programs	Student clubs
Parking	College social life



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Were there differences in YESS Survey ratings by racial/ethnic group?

Following trends noticed in previous years, African American/Black students gave generally more positive ratings than either White or Asian students. Of the 52 items on the survey, African American/Black students gave higher ratings than the other two groups on 43 items, and White students gave the highest ratings on 9 items. Asian students, on the other hand, gave lower ratings than the other two groups on 35 items. Asians gave 14 items ratings under 3.50, compared to 7 for African American/Black students.

The very highest rating on the survey by any subgroup studied is the 4.23 rating given to *Quality of Computer Services* by African American/Black students.

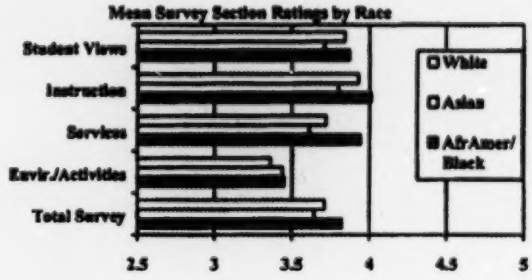
Highest Rated Survey Items

White Students	AfrAm/Black Students	Asian Students
Class size	Computer services	Admissions
Safety on campus	Admissions	Computer services
Attitude of faculty	Quality instruction overall	Class size

Lowest Rated Survey Items

White Students	AfrAm/Black Students	Asian Students
Sports/athletics	Student newspaper	SGA
Student clubs	Sports/athletics	Newspaper
Parking	Parking	Parking

The overall ratings on the survey sections by race clearly show the pattern of ratings by the three groups, with the African American/ Black students giving the highest ratings and Asians the lowest. The exception to that pattern is for the campus environment/student activities section of the survey, on which White students gave lower ratings. Of the 11 items in this section, White students gave the lowest ratings to nine, eight of which were under 3.50.



How do YESS Survey ratings change over time?

In general, the YESS Survey ratings went down from the year 2000 to 2001. Of the 52 items on the survey for which satisfaction is rated, 30 declined – 11 by more than 0.10. Of the 18 items that increased, none were by 0.10 or more.

GREATEST INCREASES 2000-2001			
YESS Survey Items	Mean 2001	Mean 2000	Difference
Orientation for new students	3.70	3.61	0.09
Quality of instruction in major	3.97	3.89	0.08
HCC's web site	3.84	3.76	0.08
Quality of instruction overall	4.04	3.96	0.08
Diversity in the curriculum	3.90	3.83	0.07
Cafeteria	3.44	3.38	0.06
Tuition/fee pay procedures	3.69	3.63	0.06
Bookstore	3.91	3.86	0.05
Availability of courses	3.63	3.58	0.05

Eleven items declined by 0.10 or more between 2000 and 2001. Nine of the 11 items showing the greatest declines were from the Campus Environment/ Student Activities section of the survey.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT			
YESS Survey Items	Mean 2001	Mean 2000	Difference
Student newspaper	3.18	3.45	-0.27
Block time	3.30	3.56	-0.26
Student clubs	3.15	3.39	-0.24
Cultural arts activities	3.43	3.66	-0.23
Condition of bldgs/grounds	3.73	3.95	-0.22
Student Gov't Assoc.	3.17	3.37	-0.20
Climate of diversity	3.66	3.78	-0.12
College social life	3.20	3.32	-0.12
Sports/athletic programs	3.16	3.28	-0.12
Parking	2.83	2.94	-0.11
Problem-solving/reasoning skills have improved	3.70	3.80	-0.10

Taking a longer-range view, ratings from the 1996 YESS Survey can be compared to the 2001 ratings for those items that were the same on both surveys. Looking at changes of a 0.20 magnitude or greater, there are 15 items – 13 of which changed in a positive direction.

Survey item	1996-2001 Difference
Admissions services	0.63
Safety on campus	0.55
Registration: in-person	0.37
Orientation for new students	0.36
Diversity in the curriculum	0.35
Availability/helpfulness of faculty	0.34
Career & job placement counseling	0.32
Quality of labs	0.30
Academic advice/assistance in course planning	0.29
Parking accommodations	0.25
Financial Aid Services	0.22
Bookstore	0.21
Quality of instruction overall	0.20
Student Government Association	-0.21
Block time	-0.24

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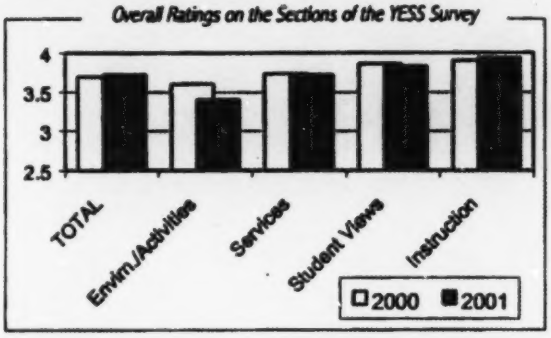
What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn from the YESS Survey results?

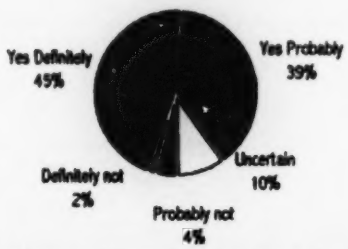
Taking all the survey items on which satisfaction was rated, 40 of the 52 items (77%) were rated above 3.50, and the overall ratings on all these items was 3.72, indicating a fairly high level of student satisfaction. And, when the major sections of the survey are examined separately, it can be seen that there are high levels of satisfaction with Instructional Topics, which had a 3.93 overall rating. Students also gave strong ratings to the sections on Student Viewpoints (3.83 overall), and College Services (3.72 overall). Only one area on the survey, Campus Environment/Student Activities, had an overall rating below 3.50, a decline of .20 from last year.

Overall Ratings on the Sections of the YESS Survey



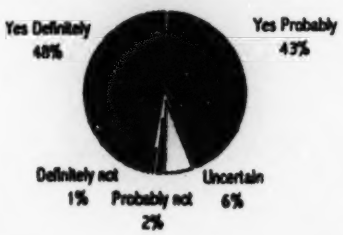
Another indicator of the general positivism of the student respondents to the 2001 YESS Survey is seen in the charts below. When asked if they would enroll again at HCC, 84% said they definitely or probably would.

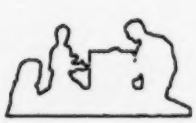
If you had it to do over again, would you enroll at HCC?



When asked if they would recommend HCC to their friends or relatives, 91% of the respondents replied positively. This is the same proportion as last year.

Would you recommend HCC to your friends or relatives?





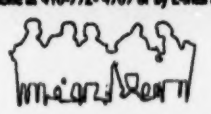
At HCC we have traditionally used a cut-off rating of 3.50 to flag areas to scrutinize to determine if there is an explanation or an actionable cause for the relatively low rating. At times, the sub-group analysis clearly points the direction a remedial course should take. Examination of the satisfaction data on the YESS Survey should not be limited to mean ratings. Looking at the proportions of respondents who are highly satisfied or dissatisfied is also valuable.

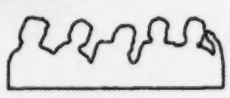
HIGHEST PERCENT SATISFIED	
Admissions services	85%
Class size	84%
Quality of instruction overall	80%
Quality of computer services	79%
Attitude of faculty towards students	78%
HCC publications	78%
Availability/helpfulness of faculty	77%
Library	76%
Registration: telephone	76%
You feel safe on campus	76%
Quality of labs	75%
Bookstore	75%
HIGHEST PERCENT DISSATISFIED	
Parking accommodations	42%
College social life	20%
Math test scores reflect your level	19%
Student clubs	17%
Sports/athletic programs	17%
Student newspaper	16%
Student Government Association	15%
Reading/English scores reflect level	14%
Physical Education facility (Gym)	14%
Availability of courses at convenient time/place	13%
Financial Aid Services: amount of aid	13%
Block time	13%
Cafeteria	12%
Cultural arts activities (art gallery, plays)	12%

While last year there were 15 areas with satisfaction levels of 75% or higher, this year there are 12, 11 of which were on last year's list. And, last year there were 11 areas with dissatisfaction rates of 10% or higher, and this year there are 14, including nine from last year's list.

Students are the most important stakeholders at HCC. This strongly held belief is reflected in the college's vision and mission statements. It is also attested to by the fact that the HCC board of trustees has identified Student Satisfaction as one of its core ends. The YESS Survey results and surveys of graduates are used to measure progress toward that end. In professing that student opinions matter, the college has an obligation to formulate effective remedies for dissatisfaction. Assessing current levels of satisfaction is an essential first step in this process. Next is comparing these levels to those in best practice organizations and determining how we "get there from here." Not to be overlooked in the quest for improvement is the vital process of recognizing those areas and services of the colleges that students have identified as consistently providing stellar-quality service.

[To ask questions or make comments about this report or to request a set of tables with detailed ratings from the 2001 YESS Survey, please contact Barbara Liberatos, Office of Planning, Research, and Organizational Development, Howard Community College, by phone at 410-772- 4707 or by E-mail at BMiberatos@howardcc.edu]





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